THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1.   A method for management of application programs on a network including a server and a client comprising the steps of:

installing a plurality of application programs at the server;

receiving at the server a login request from a user at the client;

5   establishing a user desktop interface at the client associated with the user responsive to the login request from the user, the desktop interface including a plurality of display regions associated with a set of the plurality of application programs installed at the server for which the user is authorized;

receiving at the server a selection of one of the plurality of application

10   programs from the user desktop interface; and

providing an instance of the selected one of the plurality of application programs to the client for execution responsive to the selection.

2.   A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

maintaining application management information for the plurality of applications at the server; and

wherein the establishing step includes the step of including a plurality of

5   display regions associated with a set of the plurality of application programs for which the user is authorized responsive to the application management information.

3.   A method according to Claim 2 wherein the establishing a user desktop step includes the step of:

distributing application launcher programs associated with each of the set of the plurality of application programs for which the user is authorized to the

5   client; and

wherein the receiving a selection step includes the step of receiving the selection from a one of the application launcher programs which is associated with the selected one of the plurality of application programs.

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4.   A method according to Claim 3 wherein the maintaining step includes the step of maintaining configurable user preference information for the plurality of application programs at the server and wherein the providing an instance step includes the step of providing a set of the configurable user preference information associated with the user and the selected one of the plurality of application programs to the client.

5.   A method according to Claim 4 wherein the set of the configurable user preference information includes user preferences configurable by the user and user preferences not configurable by the user which are configurable by an administrator and further comprising the step of updating the user preferences configurable by the user responsive to updates from the user and updating the user preferences not configurable by the user responsive to updates from the administrator.

6.   A method according to Claim 3 wherein the application launcher programs are JAVA™ applets and the user desktop interface is a JAVA™ applet executed by a web browser.

7.   A method according to Claim 1 wherein the establishing a user desktop step includes the steps of:
       configuring the user desktop interface responsive to an identifier of the user associated with the login request so as to provide associated information for the user desktop interface; and
       providing the user desktop interface and the associated information for the user desktop interface to the client for display.

8.   A method according to Claim 7 wherein the configuring the user desktop step includes the step of configuring the user desktop interface not to include display regions associated with any of the plurality of application programs installed at the server for which the user is not authorized.

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9.   A method according to Claim 1 wherein the receiving a selection step is followed by the step of determining a license availability for the selected one of the plurality of application programs for the user and wherein the providing step includes the step of providing an unavailability indication to the client responsive to the selection if the license availability indicates that a license is not available for the user.

10.   A method according to Claim 9 wherein the establishing a user desktop step includes the step of distributing application launcher programs associated with each of the set of the plurality of application programs for which the user is authorized to the client and wherein the receiving a selection step includes the step of receiving the selection from a one of the application launcher programs which is associated with the selected one of the plurality of application programs and wherein the step of determining a license availability includes the step carried out by the one of the application launcher programs associated with the selected one of the plurality of application programs of obtaining the license availability from a license management server.

11.   A method according to Claim 10 wherein the license management server is the server.

12.   A method according to Claim 1 wherein the plurality of application programs are installed on a network drive accessible to the server.

13.   A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of receiving at the server event logging information from the instance of the selected one of the plurality of application programs.

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14. A method according to Claim 13 further comprising the step of providing the received event logging information to a network management server associated with the server.

15. A method for distribution of application programs to a target station on a network comprising the steps executed on a centralized network management server coupled to the network of:

providing an application program to be distributed to the network
5   management server;

specifying a source directory and a target directory for distribution of the application program;

preparing a file packet associated with the application program and including a segment configured to initiate registration operations for the
10   application program at the target station; and

distributing the file packet to the target station.

16. A method according to Claim 15 wherein the network management server is a Tivoli™ server.

17. A method according to Claim 16 wherein the segment configured to initiate registration operations includes an import data file and a call to an import program executing on the target station.

18. A method according to Claim 16 where the application program is provided as a JAVA™ applet and wherein the application program is registered based on a Universal Resource Locator (URL) address accessible to a browser application and wherein the segment configured to initiate registration operations
5   includes a variable field into which the target station inserts its identification during registration operations.

19.   A method according to Claim 18 wherein the step of distributing comprises the step of distributing the file packet to a plurality of target stations each having an identification which may be inserted into the variable field at the target station.

20.   An application program distribution system for distributing application programs to a target station on a network executing on a centralized network management server coupled to the network, the system comprising:

means for providing to the network management server an application program to be distributed to remote servers;

means for specifying a source directory and a target directory for distribution of the application program;

means for preparing a file packet associated with the application program, the file packet including a segment configured to initiate registration operations for the application program at the target station; and

means for distributing the file packet to the target station.

21.   An application program management system for managing application programs on a network including a server and a client comprising:

means for installing a plurality of application programs at the server;

means for receiving at the server a login request from a user at the client;

means for establishing a user desktop interface at the client associated with the user responsive to the login request from the user, the desktop interface including a plurality of display regions associated with a set of the plurality of application programs installed at the server for which the user is authorized;

means for receiving at the server a selection of one of the plurality of application programs from the user desktop interface; and

means for providing an instance of the selected one of the plurality of application programs to the client for execution responsive to the selection.

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22.   A computer program product for distributing application programs to a target station on a network executing on a centralized network management server coupled to the network, the computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code means embodied in said medium, said computer-readable program code means comprising:

computer readable program code means for providing to the network management server an application program to be distributed to remote servers;

computer readable program code means for specifying a source directory and a target directory for distribution of the application program;

computer readable program code means for preparing a file packet associated with the application program, the file packet including a segment configured to initiate registration operations for the application program at the target station; and

computer readable program code means for distributing the file packet to the target station.

23.   A computer program product for managing application programs on a network including a server and a client, the computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code means embodied in said medium, said computer-readable program code means comprising:

computer readable program code means for installing a plurality of application programs at the server;

computer readable program code means for receiving at the server a login request from a user at the client;

computer readable program code means for establishing a user desktop interface at the client associated with the user responsive to the login request from the user, the desktop interface including a plurality of display regions associated

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with a set of the plurality of application programs installed at the server for which
15 the user is authorized;

computer readable program code means for receiving at the server a
selection of one of the plurality of application programs from the user desktop
interface; and

computer readable program code means for providing an instance of the
20 selected one of the plurality of application programs to the client for execution
responsive to the selection.